

**ANDREW JOHNSON,
MILITARY GOVERNOR
OF TENNESSEE**

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Andrew Johnson, military governor of Tennessee by Clifton R. Hall

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PREFACE

This book, as its title implies, is an attempt to trace the personality of Andrew Johnson through the years 1862-1865, when the burden of military government and reconstruction in Tennessee rested principally upon his shoulders. With this purpose in mind, I have refrained from going into several tempting by-paths of the subject. The military administration in West Tennessee, for example, for which not Johnson, but the generals of the regular army stationed at Memphis were primarily responsible, has been scarcely touched upon; so, too, the working of the Federal trade regulations in Tennessee, a subject on which a separate monograph might be written. Nor have I carried my account beyond the spring of 1865, when Johnson left Tennessee for Washington. The subsequent details of reconstruction in the state may be found in J. W. Fertig's "The Secession and Reconstruction of Tennessee," which also treats of the period of the war, but which was written before the Johnson papers in the Library of Congress were available for study.

As is apparent from the footnotes, I have based my account largely upon the Johnson papers, the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, and the contemporary newspapers. Of these last, the *Nashville Union* is a source of the highest importance. It is, of course, polemical and violently partisan, but it contains a surprising amount of detailed news of any local occurrence of interest and notices and discusses all references to Tennessee affairs which it discovers in exchanges; and its assertions can usually be checked from other sources. I have made little use of Brownlow's *Knoxville Whig*, a file of which is in the Yale University library, or of "Parson Brownlow's Book," for the obvious reason that, in this period of his career, the choleric parson was consciously blinking facts and coining political capital out of superlatives.

I am conscious of my failure adequately to present the Con-

federate side of many controverted points. There is a most regrettable dearth of material for this purpose, even the anti-administration newspapers of Memphis, such as the *Argus* and the *Avalanche* existing, unless I am mistaken, only in files so broken as to be practically of no value to the historian. Fortunately, for an investigation directed to Johnson's own career, this kind of material is not essential.

It is hardly necessary for me to add, in explanation of my method of treating my subject, that I have desired to show how the lessons learned by Johnson in reconstructing his own state constituted a training for the work to which he was so suddenly and unexpectedly called in a national capacity. It will be seen, I think, that his attitude, as president, toward the problems of reconstruction, was, in most respects, a natural consequence of his experience as military governor of Tennessee.

I am happy to express my gratitude to Professor Robert M. McElroy and Professor William Starr Myers of Princeton for their kindly interest and assistance in my work, and to Dr. Gaillard Hunt, of the Library of Congress, for many courtesies shown me.

CLIFTON R. HALL.

Princeton, N. J.
1915.

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CHAPTER I

SECESSION

The early mutterings of the secession storm awakened but little response in Tennessee. The state was a stronghold of the conservative Whig party, devoted from its inception to the maintenance of the Union as the *summum bonum* of the national life, for the preservation of which slavery and every other minor issue must compromise or give way. While the Democrats had carried every gubernatorial election since 1853, they had invariably been compelled to struggle desperately for victory over the Whigs, and this at a time when the power of that party was crumbling to pieces in other parts of the country.¹ The border states, with vital interests and intimate associations both North and South, had contributed many redoubtable Whig champions, and the political leader of Tennessee in 1860 was the Whig, John Bell, to whom, as the exponent of "the Constitution, the Union, and the enforcement of the laws," his state had given a plurality of 4,565 votes over Breckenridge in the presidential election of that year.² Allied with the same party were Thomas A. R. Nelson, Horace Maynard, William G. Brownlow, W. B. Campbell and Robert L. Caruthers, whose careers make up so large a part of Tennessee history during the war.

Tennessee's loyalty, however—as circumstances were to prove and as keen observers appreciated even in 1860—was subject to conditions. Socially and economically she was, except in her eastern district, identified with the South. The inhabitants of the slopes of her great middle division and the alluvial plains of the west were largely engaged in growing and shipping cotton. The plantation system and slavery were in full opera-

¹ Miller's *Manual of Tennessee*, p. 170.

² *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1861, p. 676. "The full Whig strength went to Bell and Everett, and the majority of the democratic votes to Breckenridge, while Douglas was supported by about 10,000 conservative Democrats."—Caldwell, *Studies in the Constitutional History of Tennessee*, p. 266. There was no Lincoln ticket in the state.